

# PIERCE'S DISEASE AND GWSS

Scientific name of GWSS: *Homalodisca coagulata*

Description of GWSS: Adults are 1/2-inch long, dark brown color with small yellow dots on head and thorax. Wing membranous, translucent, with reddish veins.

How damage is caused: GWSS is a sucking insect that extracts fluid from host plants. This feeding can spread lethal diseases to host plants just as mosquitoes can transmit malaria in humans. The pest is highly mobile and can feed on and spread disease to many plants in a day.

Bacterium spread by GWSS: *Xylella fastidiosa*

Diseases\* vectored by GWSS  
(strains of *Xylella fastidiosa*):

- Pierce's Disease (grapes)
- Almond leg scorch (almonds)
- Alfalfa dwarf (alfalfa)
- Oleander leaf scorch (oleander)
- Phony peach disease (peaches)
- Plum leaf scald (plums)
- Citrus variegated chlorosis (citrus)

How disease kills plants: The bacterium attacks a plant's xylem (water-conducting vessels), clogging it

How long Pierce's disease has been in state: Since at least the 1880s, when it wiped out 40,000 acres of winegrapes in the Los Angeles Basin

GWSS host plants: Over 100 species of plants

GWSS first sighted in California: 1989

Distribution: Southeastern United States and northeastern Mexico.  
Range has extended into southern and central California

Number of counties with GWSS-infested areas (2004): **14:** Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Solano, Tulare, Ventura

Threat to state: \$14 billion in farmgate value of affected crops

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\* partial disease list  
**PD/GWSS RESEARCH BOARD**